

GET READY! SANTA BARBARA

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Santa Barbara City Fire Department – Operations Division

You see someone in need or you see smoke coming from a building. What do you do? Why, you call 911 of course. But then what happens? Where do the calls go? Who handles them and how did the fire department get to you within five minutes?

For most, we know that when we dial 911 a dispatcher answers the phones and begins to ask a lot of questions. But it is what happens next that begins the clock moving. While the dispatcher is getting your information they will then start relaying the information to the appropriate Fire station. The tone goes out and the crews prepare themselves to get to you as soon as possible.

However, it wasn't always that way. The history of the Santa Barbara Fire Department is rich; which you will discover in this article.

So let's start from the (almost) beginning. Santa Barbara began as a quiet pueblo with little need for organized fire protection during its early development. The town consisted primarily of adobe buildings, but the building materials changed with the arrival of the "Yankee" trader and the introduction of wooden structures.

For 24 years after Santa Barbara's city government was formed in 1850, the ever-growing number of city departments were housed in buildings scattered around town. Initially, City Council met in members' homes; by 1870, the city was spending \$60 per month to rent a meeting room for the council in a commercial building. In a sense, therefore, there have been innumerable "city halls" throughout the years, but there have been just two buildings devoted solely to housing the machinery of the municipal government.

Cries increased for the construction of a City Hall in the early 1870s. One newspaper recommended budget cutting and elimination of some government positions, such as town marshal, to fund a City Hall. A new city charter, adopted in April 1874, called for a City Hall, a jail, and the town's first fire department. In July, the City Council approved plans to build a two-story brick

building in the middle of Plaza de la Guerra — at a cost of some \$8,000 — to house the council chamber, police court, a three-cell city jail, fire department, tax collection office, and office of the city clerk. Construction began in September and the building was dedicated in March 1875 with a grand ball hosted by the volunteer fire company.
(continued on page 2)



Inside this issue:

Fire Operations	2
Did You Know?	4
Stella's Corner	5
Significant Dates	6
Ready for School?	7



St. Vincent—current
Source: Realtor site



St. Vincent—1870
Source: Independent

For fire response, the city was divided into neighborhoods, each with a distinctive bell code (original 9-1-1), so firefighters would know where to respond.



921 Chapala Street
Source: Neal Graffy Collection

Fire Operations (cont)

Fire Operations (continued from pg. 1)

The building was in the form of a "T," with most of the bottom floor taken up by the fire department, but also with room for the police court and the jail. The second floor housed various departments and the council chambers, which were equipped with a captain's chair and spittoon for each councilmember. The building was surmounted by a tower with the city fire bell. The bell was rung three times every day at noon. For fire response, the city was divided into neighborhoods, each with a distinctive bell code (original 9-1-1), so firefighters would know where to respond. In the early 1890s, stables were built behind the hall to meet the department's growing need for horses. The plaza was now commonly called City Hall Plaza. A thin partition wall divided the fire department with its clattering horses and steamer from the police department and the meeting rooms of the city council.

In January of 1874, some of the town's leading citizens organized "Pioneer Company #1." J.W. Rich was named foreman of this original volunteer firefighting effort, but for nearly a year after its inception, this newly formed unit possessed scarce equipment. Firefighters had little more than willing hands with which to fight their fires. Tragedy struck in March 1874 when [St. Vincent's Orphanage](#) burned to the ground, causing sufficient public outcry to persuade City Council to purchase a hand-pumper and hose carriage for the city. In 1910 when the city received its first motorized apparatus, a 1910 Pope-Hartford hose and chemical wagon, the front facade had to be refaced and the opening widened to accommodate it.

In 1923 the building was razed and rebuilt in its current location. The fire department was moved to 921 Chapala Street. The new station cost \$18,000 to build and the firemen were anxiously awaiting their new headquarters. Once the building was complete however, it was realized that a mistake in planning had been made and it protruded ten feet further than it should have into Chapala Street. The firemen, anxious to move into their new station and not wanting to delay it any longer put their own muscle into tearing down and rebuilding the portion necessary to bring Station 1 into compliance. During the hard times of the 1920's the station became home to unemployed men needing a place to stay. In exchange for a roof over their heads they were given the option to help fight fires.

In 1963 the present station 1 was completed. Cost of the new station, which including six new fire engines, was \$650,000. (continues on page 3)

Fire Operations (cont)

Fire Operations (continued from pg. 2)



City Fire—1931



City Fire—1948

The Operations Division of the Fire Department is busy at all times; day and night, rain or shine. They only have one thing in mind, 'the Safety of the citizens and visitors of the City of Santa Barbara'.



City Fire—Current

This money came from a city bond passed in 1958. In 1964, the station was renamed and dedicated to Fire Chief C.L. Tenney, the longest serving Fire Chief in the history of the Department. He served as Chief from 1938 until his death in 1963.

Currently, Station 1 houses a front line engine, a reserve engine, an aerial ladder truck, a reserve aerial ladder truck, a heavy duty squad, a medical rescue unit, a battalion chief's car and several utility apparatus. There is a crew of eight firefighters on duty each day. This crew consists of one battalion chief, a three-person engine and a four-person truck/squad crew.

So as you can see there have been a lot of changes from the inception of the City's Fire Department. Fire Operations not only respond to fires, but to medical calls, traffic collision, train incidents, aircraft incidents and more. With all they do they also have to adhere to a rigorous training schedule to keep up their skills; as well as maintain all the equipment. The Operations Division of the Fire Department is busy day and night; rain or shine. They only have one thing in mind, 'the Safety of the citizens and visitors of the City of Santa Barbara'.

Here are some snippets of the eight city stations:

- Station 1 – 121 W. Carrillo Street - Built in 1963 and remodeled in 2009 earning the [US Green Building Council's LEED Gold Award](#).
- Station 2 – 819 Cacique Street - Built in 1992, the Station was moved from its former location on 701 E. Haley Street with the nickname "The Jungle"; see the link on page 7 find out why.
- Station 3 – 415 E. Sola Street - Built in 1928 it complied to the 1925 City ordinance stipulating that Spanish architecture would be the town's norm.
- Station 4 – 19 N. Ontare Road – Built in 1985 on, what is believed, the site of an old hanging tree. Local folklore speaks of a ghost in the station—Leo. You can read more at the link provided on page 7.
- Station 5 – 2505 Modoc Road – Built in 1950, remodeled in 2005. This Station maintains the Department's breathing apparatus and responds to serious freeway incidents.
- Station 6 – 1802 Cliff Drive – Built in 1962, remodeled in 2000. It was built the same year as Station 7 that is why it is known as the sister to Station 7. (continued on page 7)

Did You Know?

Santa Barbara was home to a major studio? If you didn't well here is a little background on the Flying A Studios.

The Flying A studio's influential and prolific operation in Santa Barbara ran between 1912 and 1921, when nearly one thousand silent films were made by the studio before it was closed.

Barney Brantingham's article in the February 2010 Independent reads; "Chicago's American Film Company arrived here in 1912 to find everything it was looking for, including a wide variety of locations and sunshine at a time when shooting outdoors was still iffy from a technical point of view. We had the Western flavor, mansions, mountains, sea, and downtown locations. In July 1912, Flying A, so named for its winged "A" logo, arrived and went to work grinding out popular Broncho Billy Western shorts.



Things were going so well, with the nation gaga over moving pictures, that in 1913, Flying A announced plans for a huge studio complex in the first block of West Mission Street, between State and Chapala streets. It was beautifully designed and included stables for the horses, dressing rooms, and a splendid glassed-in studio for interior shots.

He also wrote, "By 1919, Flying A was having serious distribution problems and its top people were heading to bigger studios in L.A., where the action was. It died on July 7, 1920, aged eight."

So for the eight years that the studio was in Santa Barbara it was the biggest employer. There were so many areas in Santa Barbara that were used for many of the silent films. You can still see some of them at the Santa Barbara Historical Museum website (below).

Although, we didn't become the Hollywood most thought, studios still come and use our community to shoot films; e.g., My Favorite Martian '97, Star Trek: Insurrection '98, Hildalgo, '03 just to name a few.

Sources:

[Santa Barbara Historical Museum](#)

[The Independent - February 2010](#)



Flying A Studios Then



Current Location

Stella's Page—Bait and Switch

Just as we look disappointedly and sadly at our reservoir, and just as sadly at our sand-bags, many of which are still in place, we once again have smoke in our skies instead of rain, and only more to anticipate. With the dearth of moisture, the soil is dry, the chaparral is dry and we are once again on high fire alert.

This is the time to review our plans for emergency preparedness. Our own landscapes are dry, however, some have ditched the dry lawn for alternate solutions, and one of the benefits of the increase in hardscape is less fire fuel close to residences. Take that walk around your home's perimeter. Look for items that may support fire. From woodpiles to gas cans, we still may have fuel to burn, and not in a positive way. Dead or dying trees across the landscape are incendiary opportunists in a fire. Our drought continues to take its toll on the urban forest. As you look closely at your own property, expand your view of the environment around you.

Pulling weeds from rock-hard soil is almost impossible, but trimming them is easy. Trimming simply reduces fuel, and that is the goal.

- Check your evacuation plan. Do not delay if ordered to leave.
- Have your Go Bag ready.
- Make sure you have personal records with you. Digital formats are good, and a thumb drive can fit on a key chain. In addition, a plastic sleeve or a gallon storage bag can hold documents secure in the bottom of your Go Bag.
- You may need to help a neighboring advanced senior prepare to get out.
- Plan for pets' needs.
- Have provisions in case your home is the destination for evacuees.
- Be prepared for power loss, even if your home is not in the path of fire.
- Follow directions and instructions of Emergency Personnel. In the event of a disaster, you are no more special than any other person in need.

To further prepare, attend a CERT training class. Yes, there is an investment of time and effort, and they are well worth your time. Participate in neighborhood get-togethers and organizational efforts. This is not only a local effort, but a nationwide effort. Take an hour with FEMA on your own time and computer. FEMA's website is loaded with valuable information to help us prepare as individuals and communities for many types of disasters.



Sherpa Fire—May 2016
Source: NBC News



Stella Larson,
Mesa Resident

Significant Dates



This section will cover significant dates to remember and some that may have been forgotten.

August

- 1—Raspberry Cream Pie Day
- 2—Ice Cream Sandwich Day
- 3—Fiesta Starts in SB
- 4—Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
- 5—Summer Olympics begin in Rio
- 6—Wiggle Your Toes Day
- 7—Fiesta Ends in SB
- 8—Refrigerator Patent Day
- 9—Book Lovers Day
- 10—Nat'l S'mores Day
- 11—Son and Daughter Day
- 12—Middle Child Day
- 13—Left Handers' Day
- 14—Nat'l Creamsickle Day
- 15—Relaxation Day
- 16—Nat'l Tell a Joke Day
- 17—Nat'l Thrift shop Day
- 18—Bad Poetry Day
- 19—Aviation Day
- 20—Nat'l Radio Day
- 21—Senior Citizen's Day
- 22—Be an Angel Day
- 23—Ride the Wind Day
- 24—[Vesuvius Day](#)
- 25—Kiss & Make Up Day
- 26—Nat'l Dog Day
- 27—Global Forgiveness Day
- 28—Race Your Mouse Day
- 29—More Herbs, Less Salt Day
- 30—Toasted Marshmallow Day
- 31—Nat'l Trail Mix Day

September

- 1—[Emma M. Nutt Day](#)
- 2—Airing of Star Trek—1965
- 3—Skyscraper Day
- 4—Newspaper Carrier Day
- 5—Labor Day - **HOLIDAY**
- 6—Read a Book Day
- 7—Nat'l Salami Day
- 8—Pardon Day
- 9—Teddy Bear Day
- 10—Sway Ideas Day
- 11—911 Remembrance
- 12—Nat'l Video Games Day
- 13—Uncle Sam Day
- 14—Nat'l Cream Filled Donut Day
- 15—Felt Hat Day
- 16—American Legion Day
- 17—Constitution Day
- 18—Nat'l Cheeseburger Day
- 19—Talk like a Pirate Day
- 20—Nat'l Punch Day
- 21—World Gratitude Day
- 22—Autumn Equinox—Fall Begins
- 23—Checkers Day
- 24—Nat'l Cherries Jubilee Day
- 25—Nat'l Comic Book Day
- 26—Johnny Appleseed Day
- 27—Crush a Can Day
- 28—Ask a Stupid Question Day
- 29—Confucius Day
- 30—Nat'l Mud Pack Day

October

- 1—World Vegetarian Day
- 2—Name Your Car Day
- 3—Techies Day
- 4—Nat'l Golf Day
- 5—World Teacher's Day
- 6—Mad Hatter Day
- 7—Bald and Free Day
- 8—American Touch Tag Day
- 9—Fire Prevention Day
- 10—Columbus Day
- 11—It's My Party Day
- 12—Emergency Nurses Day
- 13—International Skeptics Day
- 14—World Egg Day
- 15—White Cane Safety Day
- 16—Bosses Day
- 17—Wear Something Gaudy Day
- 18—No Beard Day
- 19—Evaluate Your Life Day
- 20—Brandied Fruit Day
- 21—Babbling Day
- 22—Make a Difference Day
- 23—Mother-In-Law Day
- 24—United Nations Day
- 25—World Pasta Day
- 26—Nat'l Mincemeat Day
- 27—Navy Day
- 28—Frankenstein Friday
- 29—Hermit Day
- 30—Mischievous Night
- 31—Halloween—Carve a Pumpkin Day

Are You Ready for 2016

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
[CITY OES FACEBOOK](#)

Ready for School?

The beginning of school is just around the corner; are you ready? It seems just when school ends it starts so we have four (4) quick tips to help you ease into the new school year.

1. **Focus on Pedestrian Safety**—If your child is walking to school remind them to stay on the sidewalk, use the crossing guard, and don't use headphones when walking to school. Take the time to walk the route with your child a few days before school starts.
2. **Make Teachers Aware of Food Allergies**— Make sure a note goes to the teacher if your child has food allergies. Take the time to review foods with your child.
3. **Find out the School's Emergency Plan**—Whether a lock down, evacuation or a bad fall, find out how the school handles emergencies. Make sure your child's emergency contact list is up-to-date.
4. **Help your Child Prepare**—Start before school starts by making sure your child has a good nights rest. Wake them up early, prepare a good breakfast and spend time talking to them about the positive aspects of school.

Fire Operations (continued from pg. 3)

- Station 7 – 2411 Stanwood Drive – Built in 1962, this Station has seen its share of action from the Coyote Fire in 1964, to the Sycamore Canyon Fire in 1977, along with floods, landslides and earthquakes.
- Station 8 – 40 Hartley Place – The original station was a double wide trailer occupied by Santa Barbara County fire until 1990. City Fire occupied the trailers from 1990 to 1997 then the FAA offered to finance 90% of the cost of a real sta-

tion. The current station was completed in 1998. The Station is available 24/7. They average 250-300 take-offs and landings a day and about 30-40 calls per year. Also, each ARFF (Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting) firefighter must complete at least 12 hours of additional training per year including a live burn on a simulated aircraft to work at Station 8.

This is only a fraction of what the Operations Division does and we didn't even talk about how they respond to Hazardous Materials, mutual aid, strike

teams, urban search and rescue, wildland fires, public information and other technical attributes of the Fire Operation; which are too numerous to mention in one article. So next time you pick up the phone to call 9-1-1, remember it's not just a phone call; it's a coordinated system.

Sources:

[Santa Barbara City Firefighters - IAFF Local 525](#)

[Independent – October 2006](#)

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